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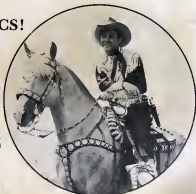
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ROY ROGERS

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# ROY ROGERS


*Rides the River*




SANDSTORM-- HEADING  
OUR WAY, TRIGGER / WE'D  
BETTER HUNT COVER--  
MUY PRONTO.



WE'LL JUST ABOUT...  
MAKE IT.



THIS HOLE WILL PROTECT YOU,  
TRIGGER BOY... NO ROOM... FOR  
ME. I'LL FIND ANOTHER PLACE...  
MAYBE.



HERE'S ONE... IT'S AN OLD  
MINE TUNNEL. I'D BETTER GO  
'WAY IN-- TO BE OUT OF  
THIS WIND.



WHAT IN THE  
WORLD--OR OUT  
OF IT--IS THAT  
NOISE?

OH-OOO  
OO!  
H!

IT SOUNDS LIKE A MAN  
CRAZY WITH PAIN—  
BUT NOT EXACTLY!  
MIGHT BE A BEAR,  
OR...



NOTHING—BETWEEN ME  
AND DAYLIGHT! UH—  
WAIT A MINUTE...  
WHAT'S THAT TIN  
CAN?



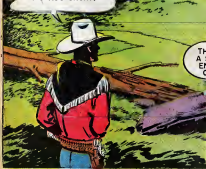
HERE'S THE MOANER—  
A TOMATO CAN STUCK  
INTO A KEROSENE TIN,  
SO IT WILL CATCH THE  
WIND AND WHOOP LIKE  
A LOST SOUL! FUNNY  
THAT ANYBODY WOULD  
PLAY THAT KIND OF  
JOKE MILES FROM  
NOWHERE!



WE'LL, I'LL BE—HAWG TIED!  
GREEN GRASS—AND TREES—IN  
A LITTLE BLIND CANYON...

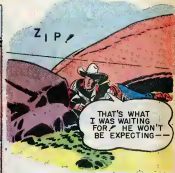
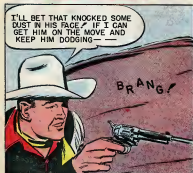


A CANYON, CLOSED AT BOTH  
ENDS! AND SOMETHING, MAYBE  
A BURRO, HAS BEEN EATING  
THE GRASS SHORT!



THERE OUGHT TO BE  
A SPRING AT THIS OTHER  
END... AND I SURE  
COULD USE A  
COLD DRINK.





I SAW THE MUZZLE  
OF HIS GUN JUST  
IN TIME!



HE'S UNDER TILTED LEDGE,  
WHERE A FEW BULLETS MIGHT  
START. A LITTLE ROCK SLICE...



HE MUST BE KNOCKED  
OUT--OR PLAYING  
POSSUM.



A  
GIRL!



THIS GUT ON  
HER HEAD IS  
NOTHING BAD...  
BUT I'M AFRAID  
HER FOOT IS  
IN BAO SHAPE.

THERE'S A NUMBER  
OF SMALL BONES  
BROKEN, I'D SAY...SHE  
NEEDS A HOSPITAL /  
BUT THE FIRST THING  
IS WATER AND  
BANDAGES.



HUMPH! I HADN'T NOTICED THAT CABIN! THAT'S WHERE I'LL FIND SOMETHING TO FIX HER UP WITH.



IT'S AS NEAT AS A PIN INSIDE... TEAKETTLE BOILING ON THE STOVE... EVEN CURTAINS AT THE WINDOW!



... SOMETHING FOR BANDAGES-- A CLEAN TOWEL, OR A SHEET... NOTHING HERE!



CLEAN WASHED FEED BAGS! HERE'S WHAT I WANT... AND--  
*Hmm!*



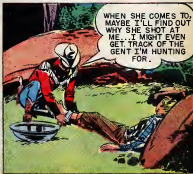
I DON'T HAVE TO LOOK INTO THIS SACK TO KNOW IT'S GOLD DUST! THE GIRL--OR WHOEVER IS WITH HER-- HAS BEEN PLACER MINING.



OH, WELL-- WHAT THEY DO FOR A LIVING HERE 'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS, PROBABLY...



WHEN SHE COMES TO, MAYBE I'LL FIND OUT WHY SHE SHOT AT ME... I MIGHT EVEN GET TRACK OF THE GENT I'M HUNTING FOR.



IT'S POSSIBLE SHE'S SEEN  
OR HEARD OF OLD JIM  
CARRADINE SOMEWHERE--



O-OH!

HEY--!



WHAT'S THE BIG  
IDEA--ARE YOU  
LOCO? OR DO  
YOU JUST HATE  
EVERYBODY?



I HATE YOU--FOR  
HURTING ME! SOB! IT'S  
JUST LIKE PA SAID--  
"IF YOU SEE A  
STRANGER POKIN' IN  
HERE, YOU CAN BE  
SURE HE'LL TRY TO  
ROB YOU OR KILL  
YOU OR BOTH!"

UMM--HMM! SO YOU  
TRIED TO KILL ME  
FIRST!



DOES THAT BANDAGE  
LOOK AS IF I MEANT  
TO DO YOU WRONG?  
BY THE WAY-- WHERE  
IS YOUR PA NOW,  
LITTLE SISTER?



PA'S GONE TO  
TOWN FOR GRUB--  
WITH JACK, OUR  
BURRO. YOU  
KNOW THAT! SO  
WHY'D YOU ASK?  
AND WHAT'S A  
SISTER? YOU'D  
BETTER NOT  
CALL ME  
NAMES!

WHAT'S A SISTER?  
GALLOPING GOPHERS!  
WHERE HAVE YOU  
BEEN BROUGHT UP?  
DIDN'T YOU EVER  
PLAY WITH OTHER  
GIRLS--  
AND BOYS?  
WHAT'S YOUR  
REAL NAME?



MY NAME'S  
MARTY SMITH,  
AND I'VE BEEN  
BROUGHT UP  
RIGHT HERE IN  
THIS CANYON. I  
NEVER SAW A  
GIRL--AND I  
DON'T EVER WANT  
TO... PA SAYS  
THEY'RE P'IZEN  
--ALL  
OF 'EM.



SA-AY! HOW'M I  
GOING TO COOK  
SUPPER FOR PA,  
WITH MY FOOT--  
OUCH!--LIKE THIS?  
I CAN'T WALK  
ON IT!

YOU WON'T BE COOKING  
SUPPER FOR MANY A  
DAY, MARTY SMITH! I'M  
TAKING YOU TO A  
HOSPITAL, WHERE THEY  
KNOW HOW TO MEND  
BROKEN BONES.



THAT'S PA--  
AND HE'LL  
KILL YOU--  
UNLESS I  
TALK HIM  
OUT OF IT!  
GET INTO  
THE HOUSE,  
QUICK--UH--  
WHATEVER'S  
YOUR NAME?

MY NAME IS  
ROY, MARTY,  
AND I DON'T  
AIM TO LET  
YOUR PA  
HURT ME!

JUST KEEP QUIET,  
AND I'LL SEE  
THAT NOBODY  
GETS HURT!



YOU'RE --  
TAKING--?  
ME--WHERE

HUSH! SOMEBODY'S  
COMING--I HEARD  
A YELL...



CONSNARN YOU, JACK, GIT ALONG  
TO THE HOUSE--SO I CAN UNLOAD  
AND WASH THIS DUST OUTA MY  
EYES! AIR'S SO THICK OUTSIDE  
I COULD HARDLY FIND THE  
TUNNEL... MARTY, WHY DON'T  
YOU ANSWER ME--?



--HUH? HOW'D YOU  
GIT IN HERE, DAG-  
GONE YOU? WHERE'S  
MARTY? WHAT'VE  
YOU DONE TO H--  
HIM?

I JUST HAPPENED  
IN--OUT OF THE  
SANDSTORM...  
MARTY'S ALL  
RIGHT, EXCEPT  
FOR A SMASHED  
FOOT--



A CHUNK OF ROCK  
FELL ON IT, PA... AND  
ROY BANDAGED IT  
UP, FINE--LOOK--A-  
HERE, ROY NEVER  
MEANT ANY HARM,  
COMING IN HERE...

OH NO! HE  
NEVER MEANT  
ANY HARM--  
THE DOD-GASTED  
COYOTE! OH  
NO!!!



LET'S NOT ARGUE ABOUT IT, SMITH... THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO GET YOUR DAUGHTER TO A HOSPITAL AS SOON AS--

DAUGHTER! DON'T YOU DAST TO SAY THAT WORD AGAIN, STRANGER. MARTY IS MY SON! AND, FURTHERMORE--

--I'M MAKIN' SURE-- THAT YOU DON'T P'IZEN HER MIND WITH ANY MORE LIES. FACE AROUND AND GIT OUT-- BEFORE I LET DAYLIGHT THROUGH YOU!

GO ON, ROY-- PA MEANS IT!



SMITH, DON'T BE A CRAZY LOON! I DON'T AIM TO LEAVE UNTIL YOU AGREE TO TAKING MARTY TO A HOSPITAL... HER FOOT--

ALL RIGHT! YOU'VE ASKED FOR IT, MISTER! I'M PULLIN' THIS TRIGGER--



--NOW!

CLICK!

SORRY I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU THAT WAY, SMITH-- BUT I'LL BE BACK TO CUT YOU LOOSE. AFTER I TAKE MARTY TO THE HOSPITAL IN FIVE PINES.

SO YOU TOOK THE SHELLS OUT-- HUH? IT WON'T DO YOU. NO GOOD-- YOU AIN'T LEAVIN' THIS CANYON--

SHE-- I MEAN HE-- AIN'T GOING! I FORBID HER! I'LL LAY A CURSE ON HIM IF HE SETS FOOT OUTSIDE THE TUNNEL.





WE'LL HAVE TO START NOW, MARTY--ARE YOU READY?

GO 'WAY! I CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITH THIS FOOT... AND YOU'VE GOT NO RIGHT TO WATCH ME--CRY! A BOY DON'T C-CRY, NO MATTER HOW HE'S-HURT!



BUT YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING! I CAN'T STAND THE PAIN. IT'S GETTING WORSE, ROY!

DON'T YOU LET HIM TAKE YOU, MARTY! DON'T YOU DAST! THE HOWLER WILL GIT YOU--OR ELSE YOU'LL BRING TROUBLE--AND DEATH--TO EVERYONE WHO TAKES UP FOR YOU... THAT'S MY CURSE, UNTIL YOU COME BACK TO ME!



I'LL TAKE YOU TO GOOD FOLKS WHO CAN STOP THE PAIN, MARTY... AND WHEN YOUR FOOT IS WELL, YOUR PA CAN BRING YOU BACK-- HANG ONTO ME, NOW!



ROY, YOU'D BETTER TAKE ME BACK! PA CURSED MY MOTHER AFTER SHE LEFT HIM--AND SHE DIED. HE TOLD ME SO.

I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANY MAN'S CURSE. YOUR PA IS JUST MAD NOW, BUT HE'LL FORGET IT.



YOU DON'T KNOW PA-- HE NEVER FORGETS... AND HOW--HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET PAST THE HOWLER IN THE TUNNEL? IT'LL EAT US ALIVE! PA SAID SO.

IT DIDN'T EAT ME.



THERE'S THE HOWLER, MARTY-- JUST THE WIND BLOWING AN OLD CAN.



I WANT TO ARRANGE FOR SPECIAL NURSES, DOCTOR... UNTIL TODAY THE CHILD HAS NEVER SEEN A HUMAN FACE BUT HER FATHER'S--AND HAS GROWN UP THINKING SHE WAS A BOY.

AMAZING STORY, ROGERS.

IF YOU'LL REGISTER THE PATIENT HERE, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST... WE SHALL PROBABLY OPERATE ON HER FOOT TOMORROW.

WHAT IS THE PATIENT'S NAME PLEASE? AND HER AGE?

MARTHA CARRADINE. AND HER AGE, I RECKON, IS JUST ABOUT 18. MOTHER IS DEAD. FATHER'S NAME IS JAMES V. CARRADINE, ALIAS SMITH, OCCUPATION, PROSPECTOR.

FINE, DOCTOR. IF HER FATHER SHOULD SHOW UP, HE WON'T BE OF ANY HELP--BUT I'LL GET IN TOUGH WITH HER OTHER RELATIVES.

BEFORE I TURN OLD "PA SMITH" LOOSE, I'M GOING TO FIRE SOME QUESTIONS HE'LL HAVE TO ANSWER HIS DESCRIPTION, AND MARTY'S TALK, FIT WITH THE STORY THAT TOM CARRADINE TOLD ME, A WEEK AGO. TOM SAID:--

ROY, I SENT FOR YOU, HOPING YOU CAN FIND MY OLDER BROTHER JIM BEFORE I DIE... I WANT TO LEAVE PART OF MY PROPERTY TO HIM--OR TO HIS DAUGHTER MARTHA...

BUT I DON'T KNOW IF EITHER OF THEM IS ALIVE, ROY. JIM DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT WHEN HIS WIFE DIED, 16 YEARS AGO, AND TOOK THEIR BABY GIRL MARTHA WITH HIM... JIM'S WIFE HAD LEFT HIM, JUST BEFORE THAT--

LUTHER, HERE -- MY ADOPTED BOY -- INHERITS MOST OF WHAT I'VE GOT. HE'LL BE A BIG CATTLEMAN, WHEN I PASS ON, AND HE DESERVES IT --

QAO! DON'T TALK THAT WAY! YOU'LL LIVE TO GET THROWN FROM A HOSS A FEW TIMES MORE.

LUTE'S WRONG! I MAY LIVE SIX WEEKS OR SIX DAYS, ROY. IN THAT TIME MAYBE YOU CAN FIND MY BROTHER JIM... I THOUGHT I SAW HIM IN TOWN A YEAR AGO, BUT HE VANISHED -- LIKE SMOKE.

I'LL TRY, TOM -- YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT.

I RECKON PA IS WHERE I LEFT HIM, HITCHED TO THAT ROCK... BUT JUST IN CASE HE DID GET LOOSE, I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL.

THE SAFEST WAY IS TO KEEP MY HEAD DOWN... AND TOSS A ROCK AHEAD OF ME TO ORAW HIS FIRE. IF HE'S LAYING --

WE'LL KNOW FOR CERTAIN, AND PRETTY QUICK, TRIGGER BOY... HERE'S "PA SMITH'S" TUNNEL INTO LOST CANYON.

**BOONG!**

IF I CAN REACH HIM  
BEFORE HE GETS A  
CHANCE TO AIM—

THERE'S **NOBODY** AND  
HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GET  
OUT OF SIGHT. ONE THING  
IS CERTAIN—PA SMITH  
GOT LOOSE AND HE'S  
AFTER MY SCALP.

A TRAP GUN, AND IT WOULD  
HAVE DROPPED ME IF I HADN'T  
BEEN LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. THE  
STONE I TOSSED HIT THE  
TRIGGER WIRE.



PA SMITH HATES MY INNARDS—  
THE OLD LOON... HE MAY BE WAITING  
FOR ME AROUND ANY CORNER  
WITH HIS SIX-GUN COCKED—BUT  
I DOUBT IT...

HE'S GONE—BURRO,  
BLANKETS AND  
BEANS, AND THAT  
MAY MEAN  
WORSE TROUBLE  
FOR MARTY.



THE QUICKER I LET TOM CARRADINE  
KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED, THE BETTER  
FOR THAT POOR KID, I RECKON.



TRIGGER! I LEFT HIM  
GROUNO-HITCHEO, RIGHT HERE...  
HE'O WAIT FOR ME TILL HE  
DROPPED, UNLESS—



BUT I HATE TO THINK HOW  
MY FEET ARE GOING TO  
FEEL BEFORE I QUIT WALKING...  
THE NEAREST RANCH IS A  
LITTLE OLD  
SHACK IN  
THE HILLS,  
ABOUT TWELVE  
MILES FROM  
HERE!



BURRO TRACKS COVER  
TRIGGER'S--THAT'S THE  
ANSWER! "PA SMITH"  
WAS HIDING OUTSIDE TO  
SEE IF I'D GET CAUGHT  
WITH HIS TRAP GUN,  
ANO...



...WHEN I DIDN'T, HE  
ROOE OFF ON MY  
HORSE, LEADING HIS  
LITTLE JACKASS.  
SERVES ME RIGHT  
FOR BEING CARELESS.



WHAT BOTHERS ME WORST IS WONDERING  
IF "PA'S" LOGO BRAIN WILL MAKE HIM  
TAKE OUT HIS GRUDGE ON TRIGGER...



JUST AFTER SUNUP, ROY LIMS  
TO THE DOOR OF A LOG-BUILT  
RANCH HOUSE.

HELLO...



HELLO,  
STRANGER!  
COME IN  
ANO SET!

I'D SURE LIKE TO, MA'AM--  
BUT I HAVE TO MAKE  
TRACKS FOR CARRAONE'S  
PLACE, WITH SOME NEWS  
HE'S BEEN WAITING A  
LONG TIME TO HEAR...  
COULD I BORROW A HORSE?  
MINE GOT STOLEN! MY  
NAME'S ROGERS.

MY MAN'S AWAY,  
MR. ROGERS, BUT  
YOU'RE WELCOME  
TO THE HORSE....





ED IS USING OUR ONLY SADDLE,  
BUT YOU CAN TIE THESE  
FEED SACKS ON INSTEAD...

AFTER THE MILES I'VE  
WALKED, THEY'LL MAKE THE  
EASIEST SADDLE I EVER  
SAT ON, MA'AM.

I SURE HOPE MARTY MEETS SOME  
WOMEN, AS FINE AS ED'S WIFE,  
IN THE HOSPITAL. THEY'LL MAKE  
HER PROUD SHE'S A GIRL.  
DOGGDNE! HOW CAN A MAN BE  
SUCH A POISON LIAR AS  
"PA SMITH?"

TOWARD NOON ROY  
REACHES THE CIRCLE  
C--BUILT BY TOM  
GARRADINE.

MARTY WILL INHERIT PART  
OF THIS RANGE, SOME DAY, IF  
HER CRAZY "PA"  
DOESN'T--SAY, IS THAT  
SMOKE COMING FROM  
THE RANCH WINDOW?

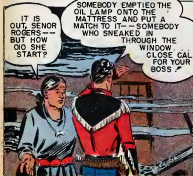
IT IS SMOKE!  
HUMP YOURSELF,  
PONY! RATTLE  
YOUR HOCKS!

HELP!  
H-ELP!

MAYBE GUN SHOTS  
WILL BRING SOME  
MORE--HELP!

OKAY, TOM--  
I'M HERE!

HELP!



IT'S ALL OVER BUT CLEANING UP THE MESS, TOM. SOMEBODY POURED KEROSENE ON YOUR BEDDING--

--WHILE I WAS ASLEEP. BUT WHO--?

HOLD ON--- THAT HORSE IN THE CORRAL. IT'S TRIGGER.

IT'S YOUR PALOMINO, ROY-- AND THE BLUE ROAN IS GONE.

TRIGGER, PONY, THERE'S ONLY ONE HOMBRE WHO COULD HAVE RIDDEN YOU HERE, SET THAT FIRE, AND SWIPE A FRESH HORSE FOR HIS GET-AWAY-- "PA SMITH."

PA SMITH? WHO IN THUNDER IS PA SMITH, ROY?

PA SMITH IS YOUR DAD'S MISSING BROTHER, LUTE... COME ON BACK TO THE HOUSE, AND I'LL TELL YOU BOTH WHAT I KNOW ABOUT HIM-- AND HIS DAUGHTER, MARTY.

SO YOU FOUND THEM. BUT I JUST CAN'T SAVVY WHY--

THAT'S THE STORY, TOM... YOUR BROTHER JIM, ALIAS "PA SMITH," MUST HAVE RIDDEN TO THE HOSPITAL, FOUND THAT I'D REGISTERED MARTY AS MARTHA CARRADINE, AND HUSTLED OUT HERE TO MURDER YOU IN REVENGE--

--FOR MY PART IN TAKING HIS DAUGHTER OUT OF HER CANYON PRISON, LUTE, I'M SENDING YOU TO THAT HOSPITAL, AND YOU'RE BRINGING THAT POOR GIRL OUT HERE JUST AS SOON AS THE DOCTOR'LL LET HER GO.

ROY, YOU'RE DEAD ASLEEP ON YOUR FEET, WHERE D'YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

TO BED, TOM... YAWW-- HUM! JUST AS SOON AS I GIVE TRIGGER A RUBDOWN AND A GOOD FEED AND AWWW-- HUM!

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, ROY AND LUTE CARRADINE KEEP A ROVING WATCH ON THE CIRCLE C RANCH.

THERE'S NO TELLING WHERE OLD JIM CARRADINE'S CRACKED BRAIN WILL TELL HIM TO STRIKE NEXT, LUTE...OF COURSE, SOONER OR LATER WE'LL CATCH HIM.

I SURE HOPE IT'S SOONER, ROY.



HIS GIRL, MARTY, WON'T EVER GO BACK TO HIM, AFTER THE WAY HE LIED TO HER, BUT I RECKON SHE WON'T BE SAFE--EVEN HERE AT THE CIRCLE C--UNTIL THE OLD COOT IS BEHIND BARS.

LUTE / THOSE COWS AND CALVES-- IN THE CREEK, THEY'RE CAUGHT IN QUICKSAND.

SOMEBODY CUT THE FENCE AND LET 'EM IN.

SOMEBODY DROVE 'EM IN HERE, ROY. PROBL'Y CRAZY JIM

NO DOUBT OF IT, LUTE.



NOW WE'LL MEND THE FENCE AND HOPE FOR THE BEST, LUTE.

YEAH / IF HER LOCO PA LEAVES MARTY ALONE, WE'LL GET ALONG.

YOU THINK A LOT OF MARTY AFTER SEEING HER ONCE IN THE HOSPITAL, DON'T YOU, LUTE?

UH-HUH / I'M DRIVING HER HOME, HERE, IN THE BUCKBOARD TOMORROW. I RECKON DAD WILL TAKE TO HER, SAME AS EVERYBODY HAS... SAME AS YOU DID YOURSELF, ROY.



YOU'RE FEELING  
A LOT BETTER,  
TOM--WITH A  
BRAND NEW NIECE  
COMING INTO YOUR  
LIFE.... HOW  
COME?

THE NEXT DAY...

HOW WOULD I  
KNOW? JUST HELP  
GONCHITA CARRY  
ME OUTDOORS, AND  
DON'T ASK QUESTIONS,  
YOU DRINKERY  
COWPOKE!

HERE COME LUTE  
AND MARTY. BOYS!  
I CAN SEE THEIR  
DUST COMING  
OVER THE  
HILL.



WHOA! HERE'S YOUR  
HOME, MARTY-- AND THE  
REST OF YOUR FOLKS.

MY HOME.  
I DON'T  
KNOW--  
WHAT TO  
SAY, LUTE!

YOU  
BRING THOSE  
CRUTCHES,  
LUTE--  
I'VE GOT THE  
WORTH-WHILE  
ARTICLE!

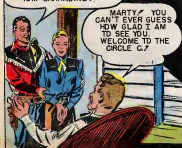
ROY, IT'S MIGHTY  
GOOD SEEING YOU  
AGAIN--I SOMETIMES  
WONDERED IF I  
EVER WOULD.



THIS IS YOUR UNCLE, MARTY--  
MY OLD AND GOOD FRIEND,  
TOM CARRADINE..

MARTY! YOU  
CAN'T EVER GUESS  
HOW GLAD I AM  
TO SEE YOU.  
WELCOME TO THE  
CIRCLE C!

YOU'RE THE IMAGE OF YOUR  
MOTHER, MARTY--HERE'S HER  
PICTURE! SHE WAS AS FINE AS  
MY BROTHER JIM WAS MEAN..  
YOU'D HAVE BEEN PROUD OF  
HER..



I AM PROUD OF HER, UNCLE TOM--AND OF YOU AND LUTE. ... I'M PROUD TO BE A GIRL! AND TO HAVE FRIENDS LIKE ROY ROGERS --AND THE NURSES IN THE HOSPITAL! IF PA WEREN'T SO MEAN, NOBODY WOULD BE AS HAPPY AS MARTY CARRADINE.

BUT I RECKON WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THE CLOUDS AND THE SUNSHINE BOTH... THAT LIGHTNING SURE LOOKS LIKE A STORM TONIGHT.

IT DOES, MARTY! I'LL TELL LUTE TO SEND EXTRA RIDERS OUT TO THE BEEF HERD ON THE RIVER RANGE.

MR. CARRADINE!

MR. CARRADINE, SOME TWO-LEGGED COYOTE HAS PUT OUT POISON SALT LICKS ON THE CIRCLE C--AND A HUNDRED OF YOUR BEST STOCK ARE DEAD OR DYING.

THAT'S CRAZY JIM'S WORK! HE'S BOUND HE'LL RUIN ME, FOR REVENGE.

IT'S ALL ON ACCOUNT OF ME! PA CURSED EVERY ONE WHO'D EVER TAKE UP FOR ME. I'M GOING BACK TO HIM--SO HE'LL LEAVE YOU AND LUTE ALONE, UNCLE TOM!

MARTY CARRADINE, SET DOWN! DON'T YOU DARE THINK SUCH A THING!

YOU CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITH THAT FOOT, MARTY--AND IF YOU COULD, I WOULDN'T LET YOU!

COME ON, LUTE-- WE'LL TAKE THEM BOTH INDOORS BEFORE THE STORM HITS. I HAVE A HUNCH WE'RE GOING TO BE BUSY TONIGHT-- WE, AND CRAZY JIM

LET ME FILL UP YOUR PLATE AGAIN, MARTY, GIRL! THIS HERE SUPPER IS YOUR WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION... YOU'VE GOT TO BE HAPPY TONIGHT.

I--I AM, UNCLE TOM! BUT I'M AFRAID, TOO--

LUTE! THE BEEF HERD BY THE RIVER BLUFFS IS LIKE TO STAMPEDE WITH ALL THIS THUNDER... MAYBE YOU'D BETTER SEE--

I'LL GO ALONG WITH YOU, LUTE.

THANKS, ROY-- I'LL GET YOU A SLICKER.

OH, LORD! IF ONLY I HAD USE OF MY LEGS.

SEÑOR ROGERS, YOU GO OUT NOW--?

YES-- CONCHITA, GUARD TOM CARRADINE AND MARTY TONIGHT. KEEP A GUN WHERE YOU CAN REACH IT... AND DON'T GO TO SLEEP.

THIS RAIN WILL WASH AWAY THE POISON SALT, LUTE

YEAH! BUT IF THAT BEEF HERD STAMPEDES OVER THE RIVER BLUFFS, WE'LL LOSE PLENTY OF 'EM, TOO.

NEAR MIDNIGHT A THUNDERCLAP WAKES THE CIRCLE O'S CRIPPLED OWNER... BUT CONCHITA SNORES ON.

AS THE RANCH HOUSE SHUDDERS IN THE STORM, A SHADOW IN THE NEXT ROOM TAKES FORM.

EH, EH, EH, I'VE GOT  
MY OWN BACK, TOM  
CARRADINE, THIS IS  
THE LAST ANY MAN  
OR WOMAN'LL SEE  
OF HER!  
EH, EH!

JIM, PUT HER DOWN,  
DAG-GONE YOU!

I'LL SHOOT THE LEGS  
OFF YOU, JIM--

EEEEEE!

HE'S GONE--WITH  
MARTY, I MISSED HIM--  
CLEAN, AND I CAN'T--  
CHASE THEM...

BUT SENOR  
PATRON, YOU  
ARE WALKING  
ON YOUR  
LEGS!

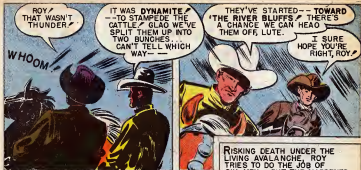
I'M GOING TO PLAY TOM CARRADINE  
ANOTHER TRICK, NOW, THAT'LL  
MAKE HIM PLUMB SICK--  
AND YOU'RE COMING  
ALONG TO SEE IT  
DONE, SMARTY  
MARTY!

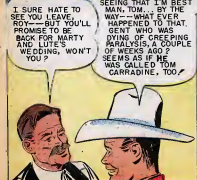
I'M GOING TO SPOOK THAT BEEF  
HERD RIGHT SPANG OVER THE  
BLUFFS. THERE THEY ARE--  
STRAIGHT AHEAD!

A HALF-STICK OF  
DYNAMITE WITH A  
3-INCH FUSE--  
HEH, HEH!

THAT'LL SPOOK A  
HERD SO NO MEN CAN  
HOLD IT, HEH, HEH!



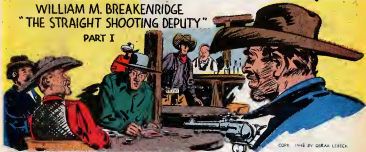




# GREAT LAWMEN OF THE OLD WEST

WILLIAM M. BREAKENRIDGE  
"THE STRAIGHT SHOOTING DEPUTY"

PART I



COPY, 1948 BY GERALD LESTER

The big, dark-eyed cowboy shaved back from the poker table. His hand—the supple hand of a gunman—moved to his vest. The other players fraze in their seats, for men had died trying to beat John Ringo's draw!

But Ringo merely flipped out his gold watch.

"Loan me a hundred dallars on this timepiece and chain," he urged sullenly. "I aim to win this game yet!"

The players' tense faces relaxed. One man forced a smile.

"You might do just that, Ringo. I reckon we'll be safer to break up the game now."

Ringo gat up, furious. Flushed with drinking, his handsome face turned dark as a thundercloud. He slammed out of the room.

Pent-up breaths whistled out in a multiple sigh of relief. Someone reached out to scoop in his winnings—and stopped, petrified John Ringo was back, with a cocked pistol.

"Shell out!" he ordered.

No one moved as Ringo swept the money from that card table, and another one. He backed away, chuckling. Moments later his ringing laugh

came back to the gamblers, punctuated by the hoofbeats of his galloping horse.

The next day, through a friend, the badman returned every dime he had taken. It was a typical Ringo joke. It could have ended, just as easily, in a shooting.

A few of the victims of this Ringoism were sore enough to call in the law. A warrant for the jokester's arrest was swam out, on the strength of a grand jury indictment. To Deputy Sheriff Billy Breakenridge fell the job of serving it.

Most peace officers in "Breck's" place would have raised a small army of gunfighters to take Ringo. This would not have been difficult. In the roaring boom town of Tambstone, rustlers like John Ringo and Curly Bill Brocius had enough friends and "business" connections to worry the "Law and Order Party." Some of this party's leaders would have welcomed a showdown with guns, any time.

Billy Breakenridge had other ideas. As fearless as Ringo's, his mind didn't run to bloodshed. He rode out alone to face the wanted man and his half-

hundred of trigger-quick rustler friends.

It was a two-day trip to Galeyville, the rustlers' hangout. A lone stranger, arriving before sunup, caused no excitement. (A posse would have touched off battle, murder, and sudden death!) Billy Breakenridge, called at Ringo's quarters, and was admitted at the point of the badman's gun.

"Breck" explained in a friendly tone that he had a warrant, and what it was all about. As man to man, he advised John Ringo to come along and get the matter cleared up.

Ringo was first angry, then thoughtful. What irked him was that the hold-up joke 'had bounced back at him, when no one had been harmed. What worried him was that his arrest would touch off a fight in which many of his friends would be killed. Reckless of his own life, he valued theirs.

To resist arrest now would be just as dangerous—if "Breck" failed, a hundred fighting possemen would follow him.

"Let's have breakfast," the outlaw invited.

"Breck" relaxed. He knew now that Ringo had decided to THINK it out instead of SHOOT it out. And he knew that he could trust this rustler's word.

Port way through their meal, Ringo broke silence.



"Why don't you ride back alone, Breck?" he said. "That way, the boys here won't know why I'm leaving, when I follow you. I'll join you tonight at Prue's ranch, and we'll go on to the County Seat tomorrow."

"Okay," smiled Breakenridge. "If the Apaches don't catch us. They're on the warpath, you know."

Two days later, the straight-shooting deputy walked into the sheriff's office with his prisoner—and with no man's blood on his conscience. There a friend of Ringo's put up the bond asked to insure the outlaw's later return for trial. Satisfied that all was well, Ringo left for Charleston on urgent business.

But all was not well—in the minds of the "Law and Order Party"—so long as John Ringo was loose. They had another card to play. No sooner was Ringo out of town than the "Law and Order" judge denied that he had ever approved Ringo's bond. Two of the Party's gunmen were given new warrants and sent to Charleston to arrest the rustler chief.

They got there, only to be disarmed and locked up themselves!

John Ringo was hopping mad, now. In the darkness before dawn he raced back to Tombstone and banged on "Breck's" bedroom door.

A few hours later the "Law and Order" judge opened court. Thinking that his men had John Ringo safe in THEIR hands, he turned a mocking gaze upon Sheriff Behan and his deputy, Breakenridge.

"Bring John Ringo in," he ordered.

And Breakenridge did!

With no other warrants against the outlaw than the one covered by his bond, Judge Stillwell had to approve the paper, much as he hated to. John Ringo walked out, smiling, to his horse.

But the real victor in the whole skirmish of wits versus war was Deputy Sheriff Billy Breakenridge. He had prevented a bloody clash between the county's shootingest factions. And he had done it with honor to the Law which he represented.

CHARLEY! I BET HARRY ROPED THAT CALF IN FIVE SECONDS FROM THE START! HARRY'S PRETTY GOOD, ISN'T HE?

YEAH, PETE! HE IS...

# CHUCK-WAGON CHARLEY'S TALES

BUT AT LEAST HALF THE CREDIT BELONGS TO HARRY'S HOSER. DON'T FORGET! A GOOD ROPER WITH A HOSER LIKE RED FLAME COULD WIN EVERY CONTEST.

RED FLAME! THE WILD HORSE THAT JIMMY BANKS TAMED... TELL US ANOTHER STORY ABOUT HIM, CHARLEY!

OKAY PAT! THERE'S JUST ABOUT TIME BEFORE WE GET TO THE CAMPIN' GROUND. Y' SEE, JUST LIKE RED FLAME HAD BEEN A KING AMONG THE WILD OREANAS OF THE OREGON BRACKS...



HE TURNED OUT TO BE A PRIZE WINNER AMONG TOP HORSES IN ROUNDUP OR RODEO.



NO COMPANY COULD CUT A STEER OR A CALF OUT OF A BUNCH AS NEATLY, OR RUN IT DOWN AS QUICK AS BIG RED COULD.

HE HAD THE WEIGHT AND THE STRENGTH AND THE KNOW-HOW THAT HAD ALWAYS MADE HIM UNBEATABLE... AND YOUNG JIMMY BANKS WAS JUST A PART OF HIM.



FOR THREE YEARS RUNNING, RED FLAME AND JIMMY BANKS WON TOP MONEY IN THE CALF ROPING AT THE RIMROCK RODEO...



...AND THEN CAME THE WAR! JIMMY BANKS ENLISTED, ALONG WITH MOST OF THE OTHER YOUNG COMPOSERS OF THE BRIDCK COUNTRY.

...AND UNSADDLED HIM THERE.



AT LAST HE STEPPED BACK...IT WAS GOOD-BYE...MAYBE FOREVER...AND RED FLAME SEEMED TO KNOW.



"THE DAY JIMMY LEFT HOME FOR GOOD, HE RODE RED FLAME OUT INTO THE BRACKS...



"FOR A LONG TIME HE STOOD TALKING TO BIG RED IN WHISPERS.



"HE SENT ONE LAST LOUD WHINNY AFTER HIS ONLY HUMAN FRIEND.



AND THEN, LIKE A RED WHIRLWIND, HE HEADED FOR THE WILD CANYONS WHERE HE HAD ONCE BEEN KING.



"FOUR LONG YEARS WENT BY AND JIMMY'S SADDLE STILL HUNG ON THE FOOTBOARD OF JIMMY'S BED AT THE RANCH...



"BUT ONE DAY A TALL YOUNG SOLDIER DROVE UP TO THE HOUSE IN A HIRED BUCKBOARD... JIMMY BANKS HAD COME HOME!"



"ONE OF HIS QUESTIONS WAS ABOUT RED FLAME... BUT NO ONE HAD SEEN HIM SINCE HE WAS TURNED LOOSE, ED BANKS TOLD HIS BOY."



"JIMMY TOOK THAT KINDA HARD... LOOKING DOWN INTO BIG RED'S EMPTY CORRAL, HE'D WONDER IF SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO THE HORSE HE LOVED..."



"RED FLAME WOULD BE MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OLD NOW... WELL, PAST HIS PRIME. HIS SPLENDID HEALTH MIGHT HAVE FAILED, OR..."



"HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN KILLED IN A FIGHT WITH ANOTHER WILD HORSE LEADER. JIMMY WOULD HAVE GIVEN ALL HE OWNED TO KNOW!"



"A FEW AT A TIME, MOST OF THE YOUNG COWBOYS, WHO HAD GONE TO WAR, DRIFTED BACK TO THE RANGE... AND ED BANKS HAD A PROPOSITION FOR THEM."



"THE WILD HORSES WERE MULTIPLYING SO FAST THAT ONE MORE THEY WERE EATING UP THE RANGE FEED NEEDED FOR CATTLE."



"A BIG, WELL-ORGANIZED HORSE HUNT ED TOLD THE BOYS WOULD HELP THE RANCHERS AND CLEAR UP A FAT PROFIT FOR THE HUNTERS. HE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THEY THOUGHT.



"THOSE YOUNG COWPOKES JUMPED AT THE IDEA! FUN, DANGER AND QUICK MONEY... THAT'S WHAT THEY CRAVED.



"SO THEY ROUNDED UP ABOUT A HUNDRED HORSE HUNTERS AND BUILT A BIG MAIN CAMP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OREGON BRIDES.



"LIKE WHEN ED BANKS STARTED HIS FIRST BIG WILD HORSE ROUNDUP THEY BUILT A NUMBER OF CORRAL TRAPS IN DRAWS AND CANYONS.



"EVERY BIG BAND OF ORANAS WAS SPOTTED AND EVERY WATERHOLE HAD A COWBOY GUARD TO KEEP THE BRONKS ON THE MOVE.



"WHEN THE BRONKS BEGAN TO GET WORN DOWN BY THIRST AND HUNGER AND NO REST AT ALL...



"...THE HUNTERS GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS AND FILLED THEIR CORRALS.





"NOW AND THEN A WILD LEADER WOULD BREAK BACK FROM A TRAP, AND TAKE A FEW OTHERS WITH HIM... A FEW COWBOYS GOT HURT."



"BUT MOST OF 'EM WERE TOO TIRED TO FIGHT, ONCE THEY WERE CORRALLED."



"EACH BUNCH OF HUNTERS BRANDED THEIR NEW-CAUGHT HORSES AT THE SPIKE CAMP..."



"...AND SENT 'EM IN SMALL BUNCHES TO THE MAIN CAMP'S BIG CORRALS. THAT LEFT THE CANYON TRAILS READY FOR BUSINESS AGAIN."



"JIMMY BANKS DRIFTED AROUND FROM CAMP TO CAMP, ASKING IF ANYONE HAD SEEN A HORSE WITH A FLAME-COLORED COAT AND A WHITE MANE... THE ANSWER WAS ALWAYS, 'NO!'"



"UNTIL ONE NIGHT, ABOUT DUSK, HE RODE UP TO A CORRAL TRAP WHERE THERE WAS SOME TROUBLE! A BIG, WHITE-MANED STALLION, THEY TOLD HIM, HAD GONE CRAZY IN THERE."



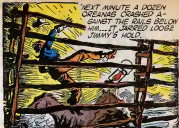
"HE'D GOT THE OTHER HORSES TO MILLING AND THROWING THEIR WEIGHT AGAINST THE RAIL... IF THEY KEPT IT UP THERE WAS A CHANCE THEY WOULD BREAK THROUGH."



"JIMMY BANKS CLIMBED TO THE TOP RAIL, FOR A LOOK. SURE ENOUGH..."



"JIMMY COULD NOT BE SURE IN THE DIM LIGHT, BUT WHEN THAT WHITE MANE ROSE LIKE A FOAMING WAVE ABOVE THE TIDE OF HORSEFLESH, THE BOY'S HEART JUMPED.



"NEXT MINUTE A DOZEN OREANAS CRASHED AGAINST THE RAILS BELOW HIM....IT JARRED LOOSE JIMMY'S HOLD.



"THE BOY FELT RATHER THAN SAW, THE SHAPE OF DEATH PLUNGING AT HIM.... HE YELLED.... 'RED FLAME! RED FLAME!'



"'RED FLAME!' HE SAID AGAIN, AS THE BRUTE STOPPED, ALMOST ON TOP OF HIM. IT WAS BIG RED, BEYOND A QUESTION!



"RED FLAME STOOD QUIVERING, AS HIS NOSTRILS FILLED WITH THE SMELL OF THE MAN HE HAD ONCE LOVED.... AND LOST.



"ALL AT ONCE JIMMY WAS HUGGING THAT PROUD, WILD HEAD.... AND WHISPERING THINGS THAT ONLY RED FLAME'S EAR HAD EVER HEARD.



"AFTER A MINUTE HE TURNED TO THE OTHER COMPOKES AND SAID: 'OPEN THE GATE, BOYS! THESE BRONCS ARE GOING FREE... AT MY EXPENSE. THAT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO TO CELEBRATE, BECAUSE... RED FLAME HAS COME HOME!'

AND HE NEVER HAD TO LEAVE JIMMY BANKS AGAIN, DID HE CHARLEY?

BUT HE DID, FAT! I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT SOME OTHER TIME. 'CAUSE HERE WE ARE AT THE CAMPIN' PLACE WHOA, YOU HOBBS! WHOOA!

BOBBY BARKS





